14: Weltfish E-4, 5 (1928-1936, 1954) 1965
(1867) NQ18 Pawnee NQ18

[p. viii is blank]

PREFACE

THE LOST UNIVERSE was first rediscovered through the language of the Pawnee people. As a research associate of the Department of Anthropology at Columbia in 1928, it was suggested to me by Franz Boas, its chairman, that I undertake a formal study of the Pawnee language, the best preserved member of the then unknown Caddoan language family. After a week's preliminary work with Henry Moses, the only Pawnee member of the One Hundred and One Ranch Circus which was performing in New York at that time, I went to Pawnee, Oklahoma, bearing a letter of introduction to his father, John Moses, dictated in Pawnee phonetics so that I could read it to him since he was monolingual. The next step took me to the Pawnee Indian Agency where I met Walter Keyes, Agency interpreter, who, taking due note of my impecunious condition, commended me to Stacy Matlock, who endowed our science with my first material on the Pawnee language. Following our usual procedure, he dictated myths and tales in the Pawnee language, which I wrote down in the International Phonetic Alphabet and subsequently obtained from him a more or less word-for-word translation, as well as a free English rendering. As the work proceeded, he felt that a more classic form of the language could be obtained from the few surviving monolingual Pawnees; I was able to record similar myths and tales, getting a translation subsequently by reading them back to Henry Chapman, a man who had a remarkable interest and facility in Pawnee and English and who continued as my interpreter and assistant in analyzing the grammatical categories. As a result of this work three pieces were published—a volume of recorded Pawnee texts, *Caddoan Texts, South Band Pawnee Dialect;* an analyzed text and grammatical sketch, "The Vision Story of Fox Boy," in the *International Journal of American Linguistics;* and an article jointly with A. Lesser, "Composition of the Caddoan Linguistic Stock," in the *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*. This work was supported by the Committee on American Indian Languages of the American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, D. C.

The next step was to record the way of life of the Pawnees of which the language was an instrument, in the interests of semantic analysis; this was undertaken under a grant from the Columbia Council on the Humanities through the Department of Anthropology, the work continuing at Pawnee, Oklahoma, until 1936 at various intervals. The present work represents the main substance of what was gathered for this purpose. The chief

14: Weltfish E-4, 5 (1928-1936, 1954) 1965
(1867) NQ18 Pawnee NQ18

narrator was Mark Evarts, a Pawnee of the Skidi Band, whose childhood was spent on the reservation in Nebraska from 1861 to 1875, when Pawnee culture was still very much an integral polity and way of life. His personal identity is embodied in the "Boy Otter" as he appears in the following narrative.

My relationship with Mark Evarts began casually in the course of my grammatical researches. Historically there were four political groups of Pawnees known as bands, the Skidi or Wolf Band, the Kitkehaxki or Little-Earth-Lodge Band, the Tsawi or Asking-for-Meat Band and the Pitahawirata or Man-Going-Downstream Band. Each of these traditionally pronounced the language somewhat differently, but it was always known that the major difference was between the Skidi and the other three known collectively as the South Bands because of their former more southern location. From linguistic samples I took of each of the four, the distinctions among the South Bands were not clear enough to identify at that time. Only the Skidi difference was clear. Mark Evarts served as my Skidi informant with Henry Chapman as interpreter in my attempt to find any grammatical and pronunciation distinctions. Evarts' English was broken and so heavily overlaid with a Pawnee accent that it was understandable only with considerable difficulty. As my Pawnee vocabulary improved, we developed a Pawnee-English mode of communication that made the interpreter no longer necessary. As I extended my research into the semantic and cultural background of the language, Evarts became a major resource and ally in my investigations and our work extended over seven years and involved the entire Oklahoma Pawnee community.

At this time (1928–1936) Evarts was living with friends and relatives. His wife and child had died tragically only a few years before, and he had lost his little farm to the bank. The crises that had beset his life as a member of his tribe and times were epic in their proportions; as a man in the decline of his years, he had many questions to ask, and I, as a novice in life's ills and trials, had many questions to ask of him. Many of his questions concerned the white culture and its values, and, as a young anthropologist, mine sought answers through the cross-cultural perspective I hoped to find in studying the Pawnee way. Together we established the language of our common humanity and communicated what we wanted to know about the special character of each other's culture as well as of life in general. It was my purpose to understand the Pawnees as people, not as Indians or as social categories and certainly not as historical antiques.

Although in the 1920's only seven hundred Pawnees survived, some Pawnee customs remained among them and at least eight of the older people spoke no other language than Pawnee. The town of Pawnee, Oklahoma, was surrounded by the allotted lands of the Pawnees, the lands of each band being located in a different direction. The bands were still